

THE JACOBS REPORT

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S.O.S FOR S.O.S BALLOT PROPOSAL

Signatures Challenged; Ruled Insufficient

According to proponents, signatures collected by Stop Over Spending (for their government-limiting ballot effort) were plentiful enough to place their issue on the November ballot.

That was until the Bureau of Elections, responding to a challenge by Defend Michigan, ruled that the proposal was disqualified by a substantial number of invalid signatures.

The bureau estimated, based on 3,872 sampled, that the proposed constitutional amendment had only 305,403 valid signatures. To qualify for ballot placement, 317,757 signatures are needed.

Defend Michigan viewed the bureau report as vindication of concerns they had raised earlier about the petition drive.

Stop Over Spending vowed to challenge the discounted signatures at an upcoming Board of State Canvassers meeting and, if unsuccessful at that stage, would take the issue to court.

“Defend Michigan provided concrete evidence that Proposal 6 supporters broke the law and violated the Constitution in their scheme to put this deceptive proposal on the ballot, and we were confident that our evidence had exposed their fraud,” said spokesperson Roger Martin. “The out-of-state extremists behind Proposal 6 broke Michigan law and abused the process that protects citizen access to our ballot, and they should be ashamed.”

Among the sample group, Defend Michigan found 606 signatures that were duplicates. Under Michigan case law, anyone signing a petition more than once invalidates all instances of their signature.

Kurt O'Keefe, chair of the Stop Overspending Committee, said, “Whatever the appeal process is, we'll undertake it.”

DTE: BEWARE OF PHONE SCAMS

Con Artists are Posing as Utility Workers

DTE Energy's Detroit Edison and MichCon subsidiaries are warning customers to look out for con artists posing as utility workers in order to gain access to personal information and property. These impostors frequently prey upon the elderly.

In recent weeks, a number of customers have received telephone calls from con artists claiming to be DTE Energy employees, asking for payment of an outstanding bill and threatening to shut off service if it's not immediately paid by credit card or by providing specific checking account

information. Some customers unwittingly gave the callers their credit card numbers, which were later used to fraudulently purchase goods and services in several states.

“Unfortunately, there are unscrupulous people out there who may pose as Detroit Edison and MichCon employees to take advantage of our customers,” said Michael Lynch, DTE Energy's director of corporate security. “We urge customers to be cautious to avoid becoming a victim of these criminals.”

DTE Energy customers whose accounts are in arrears and are in jeopardy of service shut-off do sometimes receive calls from DTE Energy representatives who offer them the option of paying their bill over the phone with a credit card. However, such calls are made only to customers whose accounts are significantly overdue. Collection calls are never made to customers whose accounts are current.

How can customers be sure they're speaking with a legitimate DTE Energy employee and not a con artist? Lynch offered these suggestions:

- Pull out your most current DTE Energy bill. Insist that the caller tell you the account number and amount due.
- If you suspect the call may be fraudulent, hang up and call DTE Energy toll-free at 800.477.4747. Ask to be connected to a customer service representative who can confirm the status of your account and make appropriate arrangements for payment, if needed.
- If you have caller I.D., the display will indicate that the call is from DTE Energy.
- If you have received a call of this nature and believe you are the victim of fraud, contact your local police immediately.

In addition to the telephone scam, Lynch said customers should be aware of a similar con in which thieves posing as utility employees appear at customers' homes demanding bill payment on the spot. Sometimes these thieves will work in pairs. One will distract the homeowner while the other searches the house for money and other valuables.

DTE Energy does not collect or accept utility bill payments at customer homes or businesses. DTE Energy field employees carry photo identification badges that identify them as DTE Energy employees. Customers who are not sure about an employee's identification, or who want to verify the nature of the work to be done at their homes, should call DTE Energy at 800.477.4747.

“We want customers to know that if they have any questions about someone claiming to represent Detroit Edison or MichCon, they can call us for verification before they open their doors or provide information of any kind,” said Lynch.

It is a felony for people to impersonate public utility workers, whether or not they actually gain entrance to a home and commit a crime.

Lynch said customers should keep these additional tips in mind to avoid becoming a victim:

- All Detroit Edison and MichCon employees and contractors carry photo identification badges, and are required to display their badge if asked. Customers are encouraged to ask for identification.
- Do not allow people into your home who claim to offer a Detroit Edison or MichCon refund. DTE Energy employees never deliver cash refunds or rebates to customers' homes.
- Do not pay for tree-trimming work by individuals claiming to be from Detroit Edison or a Detroit Edison contractor. The utility does not charge for line clearance work. Additionally, before tree-trimming crews enter a neighborhood for scheduled line clearance work, customers are notified about the work to be done.
- Call the police if you believe the person at your door is a con artist posing as a utility worker.

WIT, WISDOM, ETC . . .

Quotables

“A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.”

-Sir Winston Churchill

“I find that the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have.”

- Thomas Jefferson

Quote of the Week: George Carlin

“Some people see things that are and ask, ‘Why?’ Some people dream of things that never were and ask, ‘Why not?’ Some people have to go to work and don't have time for all that ...”

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State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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